

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 624

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of William Michael "Mike" Fowler of Ridgely.

WHEREAS, over much of its history, Tennessee has been known as the Volunteer State because it has been the home of so many valiant men, women, and children who have responded with great courage and strength of character in times of trouble and adversity; and

WHEREAS, William Michael "Mike" Fowler was one such courageous Tennessean who, on August 5, 2007, lost his life while saving his son from dangerous currents in a slough on the Mississippi River; and

WHEREAS, on that fateful day, Mr. Fowler and his son, Will, along with several other adults and children, had been riding all-terrain vehicles in the Sheep Ridge-Dunlap Bar area west of Ridgely; and

WHEREAS, it was not unusual for riders to take a dip in the river slough after a hot and dusty ride, and four boys, including eleven-year-old Will Fowler, went into the water while the adults stayed on the bank, visiting and taking a break on their vehicles; and

WHEREAS, a steep drop-off in combination with an unusually swift and circular current made the river slough deceptively dangerous that day, and witnesses said the boys were soon in trouble and calling for help; and

WHEREAS, Mike Fowler, along with two other adults, went to their rescue; through the efforts of the adults and children involved, six of the seven made it safely back to shore; and

WHEREAS, if not for Mr. Fowler's brave and heroic actions, his son would likely have perished; as Lake County Sheriff Danny Tibbit remarked, "We could have lost six or seven lives in that situation"; and

WHEREAS, Mike Fowler was born on October 15, 1965, in Dyersburg, to Teresa Morehead Fowler and O.V. Fowler; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, he attended college for a period of time before beginning his career as a transport hauler, in which position he earned the respect and admiration of customers and co-workers alike for his professionalism, ability, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, Mike Fowler enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Mary Ellen Barker Fowler, and was the proud father of his beloved son, Will Fowler, and daughters, Mia Fowler and Ellen Fowler, and step-daughter, Emily Wilson; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, he is further survived by his grandmother, Mrs. Marie Fowler; two brothers, O.V. Fowler, Jr., and Kenny Fowler; and a sister, Vickie Shaw; and

WHEREAS, deeply devoted to and inspired by his family, Mike Fowler always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, a man of religious conviction, Mr. Fowler was an active and devout member of Abundant Life Fellowship Church of Ridgely, which he served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, this valiant Tennessean leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly should pause to remember and honor the singular courage and selfless commitment of this exceptional father and human being, the late Mike Fowler; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the memory of William Michael "Mike" Fowler, recalling his impeccable character, unquestionable valor, and stalwart commitment to living an exemplary life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Fowler.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.